

MEETING MINUTES
San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Advisory Committee Meeting
February 10, 2023, 10 am – 12 pm

Bay Area Metro Center
375 Beale St., Board Room, 1st Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105

Agenda and meeting materials are available at:
www.sfbayrestore.org

1. Call to Order

Jessica Martini-Lamb, Chair of the Advisory Committee (AC), called the meeting to order.

2. Determination of Quorum

AC member attendance: Sara Azat, Erik Buehmann, Erika Castillo, Adrian Covert, Arthur Deicke, Letitia Grenier, Christopher Gurney, Shin-Roei Lee, Rebecca Schwartz Lesberg, Roger Leventhal, Chris Lim, Jessica Martini-Lamb, Lisa Horowitz McCann, Marquita Price, Ana Maria Ruiz, Luisa Valiela, Diane Williams, Beckie Zisser

Staff attendance: Jessica Davenport, Karen McDowell, Catie Thow, Sara Haugen

3. Public Comment

Deputy Program Manager Jessica Davenport shared an update that the Governing Board will be appointing and reappointing Advisory Committee (AC) members at their March 3rd meeting, and thanked members who are completing their terms and leaving the AC for their service: Arthur Deicke, Roger Leventhal, Carolyn Bloede, Steve Chappell, Chris Gurney, Shin-Roei Lee, Chris Lim, Mike Mielke and Marina Psaros. The current AC Chair and Vice Chair have two-year terms that are expiring soon, and they are interested in continuing for another term. Those interested in chair positions may contact staff if they would like to be considered, as well. The AC can recommend members for chair positions at the April meeting, and the Board will appoint members to the positions in May. Public Information Officer Taylor Samuelson is organizing the upcoming Board tour, the first of four, in Marin on February 24th. Members should RSVP to Taylor if they'd like to attend. The text of new annual report and a new video intended to be shared at city council and county board of supervisors meetings will be presented at the March 3rd Governing Board meeting. The annual report text will be posted to the website beforehand.

4. Approval of Advisory Committee (AC) Meeting Minutes of November 4, 2022

(ACTION)

Item 4: [Draft Meeting Minutes for November 4, 2022](#)

Arthur Deicke moved approval of the minutes and Ana Maria Ruiz seconded. Chris Lim, Chris Gurney and Rebecca Shwartz Lesberg abstained. There were no objections. The minutes were approved with no corrections.

5. **Chair's Report from December 16, 2022 Governing Board Meeting**
(INFORMATION)

Chair Martini-Lamb reported activities from the December 2022 Governing Board meeting. Chair Pine announced the passage of the federal San Francisco Bay Restoration Act to create a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency restoration program in San Francisco Bay. Staff shared an information item about providing information to city and county elected officials about how the Authority can help implement nature-based solutions. Staff are creating a short video to share with councils about the Authority's accomplishments and grant opportunities. There was a request to present on shoreline resilience at Association of Bay Area Governments General Assembly in June 2023 and work with the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) regarding climate adaptation strategies. Taylor Samuelson presented the proposed 2024 Board tour schedule, and there is a Board tour coming up on February 24th. The Board approved the Suisun Marsh Essential Fish Screen Rehabilitation Project, Phase 2, and a funding augmentation for the Tiscornia Marsh Restoration and Sea Level Rise Adaptation Project. The Board heard and accepted audited financial statements and appointed two new Oversight Committee members: Arthur Deicke and Demece Garepis. They also formed an ad hoc committee to select AC members. The Board heard a Measure AA special tax levy report and an informational update on State Route 37 report. Chair Martini-Lamb closed by thanking the outgoing AC members for their service.

6. **Project Update: Deer Island Basin Tidal Wetlands Restoration Project, Phase 1**
(INFORMATION)

Roger Leventhal, Marin County Flood Control District

Item 6: [Presentation on Status of Deer Island Basin Tidal Wetlands Restoration Project](#)

Roger Leventhal shared updates on the Deer Island Basin Complex planning project. Novato Creek Baylands has over 1,000 acres of former diked baylands, with a legacy of older development. Today, Novato Creek becomes partially filled with accumulated sediment due to diking and tidal flows, which results in a need for dredging.

The Authority's grant funded the project through the permitting phase. In the next phase, Marin County Flood Control District will aim to restore the two bird ponds, and in a future phase, the larger marsh area north of the ponds. Novato has natural uplands so there is no need to build a large levee around the edges of the north marsh to protect homes. There are sensitive species onsite that will need to be considered in future restoration. The goal is to increase the capacity of the creek and not have to dredge it in the future. Overall, the multi-benefit project aims to incorporate natural processes to jointly achieve flood control and restoration objectives.

The presentation included some background information on levees. Most levees in the Bay Area were built by farmers and not designed by engineers. Geotechnicians will not recommend simply adding fill onto these non-engineered levees, so generally levees need to be rebuilt for increases in elevation. Levees, even well-built ones, are living structures requiring maintenance. Burrowing animals are one of the most common causes of levee failures outside of major storms. Novato levees, and others around the Bay, are

malfunctioning, but levee repairs are too costly to repair in many cases. Ecotone levees need more room (200 to 600 feet) than traditional levees.

One option for the north marsh restoration area in Deer Island Basin is to build a levee in the middle of the basin to protect a Novato Sanitary District force main (a treated wastewater discharge pipeline) if it cannot be relocated, but the preferred method is full restoration of the basin with minor levees within it. The next step for the bird ponds phase is submitting permit applications, with construction starting in 2024. Roger noted that this is his last AC meeting and that he will be joining BCDC's Leadership Advisory Group for the Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan.

- A member asked about the current funding needs for the next phase. Roger said it will be in the \$7-\$8 million range, but they are aiming to decrease costs. Dealing with the Novato Sanitary District force main may cause higher costs.
- A member appreciated Roger's presentation and thanked him for sharing what didn't go well with the project. They appreciated the look into technical aspects of levees and are thinking about equity impacts of restoration projects on communities in other areas.
- A member asked if nutria have made it out to this area, as well as other burrowing animals. They asked about alternative methods to prevent burrowing. Roger replied that nutria have not been seen, but other burrowing animals have, and they are considering various methods to prevent burrowing in ecotone levees.

7. **Recommendation to Governing Board on Developing an Equity Framework** **(ACTION)**

Lisa Horowitz-McCann, Vice Chair

Catie Thow, Sea Grant Fellow

Item 7: [Development of an Equity Framework for the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority](#)

Attachment 1: [Equity Framework Outline](#)

Chair Martini-Lamb asked if there were any conflicts of interest for this item. There were none. Lisa Horowitz-McCann introduced the item as chair of the ad hoc Equity Subcommittee. Catie Thow presented the recommendation to develop an equity framework.

Staff provided context of equity efforts to date, as described in Item 7. The goal is to create a long-term equity framework and develop five-year work plans to implement the framework's goals. This effort calls for coordination with the development of Tribal Engagement Recommendations and alignment of Wetland Regional Monitoring Program (WRMP) indicators with the Authority's performance measures, along with regional efforts of BCDC's Environmental Justice Advisors program, and others that arise. There may be the need to hire a consultant to gather input from impacted communities to share input with neutral third party. Staff may also hold Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion workshops with AC and Board members to collect feedback. Board tours may allow for place-based community outreach to gather feedback. The tentative timeline extends from present through the fall of 2024. An outline of the framework was included in

Attachment 1. The proposed process will be brought to the Board's March 3rd meeting if approved today.

- A member commented that in 2019, BCDC approved new policies for the San Francisco Bay Plan including for environmental justice and equity, which includes meaningful community engagement for projects. This proposed framework is consistent with BCDC's requirement for meaningful engagement.
- A member asked if there is a proposal for metrics and success indicators.
 - A member responded that metrics will be developed as part of the development of the framework.
 - Another member noted that collaboration with the WRMP People and Wetlands group will help inform development of the indicators for the Authority's purposes.
 - A member noted that a metrics should be applicable to the full range of projects the Authority funds, such as a restoration project like Deer Island Basin, in an open space area, compared to one in an economically disadvantaged community with a higher population density.

Arthur Deicke moved the motion and Marquita Price seconded. There were no abstentions or recusals.

Ayes: Sara Azat, Erik Buehmann, Erika Castillo, Adrian Covert, Arthur Deicke, Letitia Grenier, Christopher Gurney, Shin-Roei Lee, Rebecca Schwartz Lesberg, Roger Leventhal, Chris Lim, Jessica Martini-Lamb, Lisa Horowitz McCann, Marquita Price, Ana Maria Ruiz, Luisa Valiela, Diane Williams, Beckie Zisser

8. **Creation of an AC Partnership Program (ACTION)**

Sara Haugen, Project Manager

Item 8: [Proposal to Create an AC Partnership Program](#)

Attachment 1: [AC Charter, Redline Version](#)

Sara Haugen presented the staff's proposal to create a partnership program within the AC to encourage the exchange of ideas, expertise, and institutional knowledge. The Board ad hoc committee to appoint AC members will be recommending 11 appointments and holding 9 seats for another round of recruitment with a focus on increasing diversity and seeking candidates focused on environmental justice. A partnership program would allow for new and seasoned members to build cohesion on the committee in a time of hybrid meetings. Interested members are also encouraged to support the next round of recruitment.

The AC discussed the program and how to recruit younger members to the committee.

- A member asked if the program is voluntary, how the partnership would be structured in practice, and if this has been seen working in other settings.
 - Staff responded that it is voluntary, and that members would volunteer to be paired up with new members.
 - Staff responded that they are aware of programs like this working to recruit more diverse and younger committee and board members.

- A member asked to clarify the age of youth to be recruited to the AC. Members discussed the importance of how youth are engaged on the committee and concurrent efforts to involve more youth in bay restoration agencies.
 - Staff noted that SFEP is developing an Estuary Youth Council. Their range is 18+ as it could be a challenge to include minors.
 - A member requested a future information item about the Estuary Youth Council from San Francisco Estuary Partnership (SFEP) to avoid duplicating and to interface with the effort.
 - Members discussed whether to use the term “partnership” for the program and raised other options such as exchange, popular education, and mentorship. Members expressed support for “exchange” as an alternative to “partnership”.

Marquita Price moved to approve with the modification of the AC charter to use “exchange” to replace “partnership” in the program name and Sara Azat seconded. There were no abstentions or recusals.

Ayes: Sara Azat, Erik Buehmann, Erika Castillo, Adrian Covert, Arthur Deicke, Letitia Grenier, Christopher Gurney, Shin-Roei Lee, Rebecca Schwartz Lesberg, Roger Leventhal, Chris Lim, Jessica Martini-Lamb, Lisa Horowitz McCann, Marquita Price, Ana Maria Ruiz, Luisa Valiela, Diane Williams, Beckie Zisser

9. **Announcements (INFORMATION)**

There were no announcements.

10. **Public Comment**

A member asked if the Brown Act rules apply to the Governing Board, or if they are allowed to teleconference in from their home, and if this also applies for the AC.

- Staff clarified that Board members can attend via Zoom from a publicly accessible, noticed, and ADA-accessible location under the Brown Act, which operates under the same requirements as the AC.

11. **Adjourn**

Chair Martini-Lamb adjourned at 11:28 AM.